



The International Fancy Guppy Association



Dedicated to Promoting The Fancy Guppy Hobby

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The Effects of PH Shock

By Frank Schulerbrandt

The effects of ph shock can be devastating to your guppies; I know it has happened to me several times. I Have 28 tanks, 20 of these tanks are 10 gallon, the remaining are 5 1/2 gallons. My rack is 6 feet in width my the top frame of my highest tank is 7 feet. The temperature is controlled by heaters in each of the ten gallon tanks (75-80 degrees). The 5 1/2 gallon tank are on the top level the temperature is 74 degrees. The ph in most of my tanks are about neutral. But once in a while the pH in 1 - 3 tanks might be 5.0 (yellow on the ph chart).

The first sign that the fish are in stress is that one or two guppies might be hanging on top of the water in the back corner of the tank. Then a couple of hour later most of the tank will be hovering in the back as well. A water change would be the logical choice, and this is where I got into trouble. I changed 20 percent of the water, but the fish were still hanging. I figured they were just stressed out a bit and would let them adjust to the water.. The next morning they had a white fungus on the tail and maybe a white spot here and there on their body. I treated this with a fungus medicine and went off to work. When I returned from work I was shocked by what I saw. In one tank half the fish were dead, the other half had a white slime all across their body and tail, I did a partial water change. This again did not work, the fish died that night. The other tank had dead fish floating all over the place. Little did I know what was going on. Columnaris had struck again.

I never had this problem before but in these last three years the water in New York City is just not the same, In years past I could take any guppy and move it to any tank with no ill effects on the fish. Now I have to test the ph of the water and make ph adjustments, before I can move the fish to its new tank. A simple ph check can prevent an outbreak of Columnaris or any other bacteria or fungus based elements that may be waiting in the wings to attack your stressed out guppies. You can rapidly adjust your ph upward toward the neutral ph level with baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), however the same rapid decrease in the ph can put your guppies into jeopardy very quickly. Baking soda added in 1/4 teaspoons quantities each half hour will do the trick. After bringing the ph up to neutral. Then you can do your water change of 20 percent. Remember before treating your fish for a possible disease, check your water quality first.

Additional note:

When a mature batch of fish are in a tank and one or more females have babies in that tank, if these babies are eaten by their parents (this can be recognized by black droppings at the bottom of the tank) THIS can trigger a rapid drop in your ph level.

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Filtration

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